In the claims:

Please substitute the following full listing of claims for the claims as originally filed or most recently amended. Claims 7, 8 and 15 - 22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

1. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter having a laminate structure, comprising:

a first group of dielectric thin film materials;

a second group of dielectric thin film materials; and

a third layer of dielectric thin film material,

wherein a plurality of dielectric materials different from one another in refractive index with respect to a wavelength of incident light are classified into said first group and said second group so that a maximum value among the refractive indices of the dielectric materials belonging to said first group is lower than a minimum value among the refractive indices of the dielectric materials belonging to said second group;

wherein at least one layer of dielectric thin film selected from the dielectric materials belonging to said first group and at least one layer of dielectric thin film selected from the dielectric materials belonging to said second group are alternately laminated to form said laminate structure, said laminate structure being mounted on a transparent flat substrate beginning with a first layer adjacent to said transparent flat substrate; ~~and~~

wherein said third layer of dielectric thin film has a refractive index which is higher than the maximum value selected from said refractive indices of the dielectric materials belonging to said first group and which is lower than the minimum value selected from said refractive indices of the dielectric materials belonging to said second group and is laminated on an

outermost surface of said laminate structure, said laminate structure being between said third layer and said transparent flat substrate; and

wherein said first layer includes the dielectric thin film selected from the dielectric materials belonging to said second group.

2. (canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A polarizing filter according to Claim 1, wherein one to four layers of dielectric thin films selected from said first group and one to four layers of dielectric thin films selected from said second group are laminated alternately on said transparent flat substrate.

4. (Previously Presented) A polarizing filter according to Claim 1, wherein a refractive index difference with respect to the wavelength of incident light between adjacent dielectric thin films selected from the dielectric materials belonging to said first and second groups respectively is in a range of from 0.15 to 1.2, both inclusively.

5. (Previously Presented) A polarizing filter according to Claim 1, wherein optical film thickness of each of said dielectric thin films is in a range of $0.25\lambda \pm 0.15\lambda$ in which λ is a wavelength of incident light.

6. (Previously Presented) An optical device using a polarizing filter defined in Claim 1, wherein an angle of incidence on said polarizing filter is in a range of from 20 to 70 degrees.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein a total number of ~~at least three~~ layers of dielectric thin film is at least three layers and not larger than seven layers.

10. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein the ~~first~~ refractive index of said layer on an outermost surface is 1.62 or 1.46.

11. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein said ~~at least three~~ layers are constructed by three layers, the refractive index of the first layer is 2.13, the refractive index of the second layer is 1.46, and the ~~first~~ refractive index of the layer on an outermost surface ~~layer~~ is 1.62.

12. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein said ~~at least three~~ layers are constructed by three layers, the refractive index of the first layer is 2.13, the refractive index of the second layer is 1.40, and the first refractive index of the outermost layer is 1.46.

13. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein said at least three layers are constructed by seven layers, the refractive indexes of the first to sixth layers are 2.13, 1.46, 2.13, 1.46, 2.13 and 1.46, respectively, and the ~~first~~ refractive index of the outermost layer is 1.62.

14. (Currently Amended) A polarizing filter according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein said at least three layers are constructed by five layers, the refractive indexes of the first to fourth layers are 2.13, 1.46, 2.13 and 1.46, respectively, and the first refractive index of the outermost layer is 1.62.

15. - 22. (Canceled)